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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2009

IN TODAY'S PAPERS

Armenia, Azerbaijan Seek Solution to Conflict  
Media outlets give extensive coverage to the meeting of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the US Embassy in Prague, accompanied by the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group, to seek solutions to the territorial conflict between their countries. Mainstream Sabah headlines "Peace Winds in Caucasus," and reports that, "President Aliyev and President Sargsyan reached an agreement on the principles of the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. A timetable and roadmap are being developed for a settlement." Mainstream Haberturk reports, "the compromise reached by the two leaders was "historic," adding, "two leaders have passed a critical threshold in Prague." Mainstream Hurriyet reports "US-Russia-France: Agreement ok" and says "the US, Russia and France said in a joint statement that the meeting of the two presidents was "constructive," and added the two parties reached an agreement about the methods for working out a settlement." Mainstream Sabah quotes Matt Bryza, Deputy Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs as saying "for the first time, there's been a lot of improvement and we expect concrete results for a settlement by the end of the year." Mainstream Milliyet adds, "the next meeting will be in June with the Minsk Group chairmen and the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Liberal Radikal reports "the deal in Prague has been the first step towards a settlement since 1993," and the paper quotes President Abdullah Gul speaking to journalists en route to Prague saying, "2009 offers an opportunity for solving problems in the Caucasus and this opportunity shouldn't be missed."

Comment on Prague Talks

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "As President Gul mentioned after the talks in Prague, there is significant hope for the future and 2009 should be considered the year of opportunity for peace in the Caucasus. The fact that a meeting between Azeri and Armenian leaders was held in the U.S. Embassy in Prague clearly indicates the strong U.S. commitment to the problem-solving process."

President Gul Meets with DTP Leader Ahmet Turk

Mainstream Sabah and Islamist-oriented Zaman report in a series of meetings held with opposition leaders, that President Gul received DTP leader Ahmet Turk yesterday. Reportedly during the meeting, Gul warned Turk to remain distant to the PKK and asked the DTP to work on the problems of the whole country, not just of one region.

#### Editorial Opinions on PKK and Kurdish Problem

Ertugrul Ozkok wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The Milliyet interview with PKK's Karayilan should be taken seriously by state authorities.

The leader of the organization is now talking about some concrete steps toward disarming the PKK. Public opinion is more mature than before. Frankly speaking, I'd like to be a messenger on behalf of the imprisoned leader Ocalan by interviewing him because what he says on this is very important."

Cengiz Candar wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "There is an ongoing silence in official circles about the PKK leadership's call for reconciliation and ceasefire. It may be hard to say, but we have to face the fact that the PKK is an integral part of the Kurdish problem and cannot be left aside. Ankara should move and take proactive steps toward finding the right way to address the Kurdish problem by considering all aspects of it."

Yasemin Congar wrote in leftist Taraf: "The recent statements from the PKK's Karayilan should not be ignored. He is showing some clear direction on how to win over the PKK militants and get them to return home. This is a process which can start the actual disarming of the PKK. One of the demands of Karayilan is an amnesty for imprisoned militants as well as the leader Ocalan. It may sound

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far-fetched to free Ocalan at this point, but at least the state should consider steps for the 4,000 militants in prisons thru a liberal interpretation of Article 221 of the Penal Code, known as the Repentance Law."

#### Constitutional Court Vice Chairman Osman Paksut was Monitored Coincidentally

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that Constitutional Court Vice-Chair Osman Paksut claimed he was the victim of wire tapping in the Ergenekon investigation and has filed a criminal complaint against the Ergenekon prosecutors. The prosecutors, on the other hand, claimed that Paksut made phone calls with a commercial line belonging to his wife, and his calls were monitored coincidentally. They adding that certain issues overheard in the wiretapping constitute crimes.

#### Village Guard System Might be Abolished

Hurriyet, Zaman, Milliyet, Radikal, Aksam, Vatan: In the aftermath of the shooting of 44 people at a wedding ceremony in Bilge village of southeastern province Mardin, the incident remains the top issue on the domestic agenda. Mainstream Hurriyet reports that the number of detainees linked to the massacre increased to 11. The gendarmerie collected all weapons of the village guards in the village. Interior Minister Besir Atalay said these weapons were sent for ballistic examination. Tabloid Aksam notes that the massacre in Mardin triggered heated debates about the village guard system. Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek said "the system might be revised or abolished. Mainstream Milliyet quotes President Gul saying "The incident in Mardin is the result of ignorance, not the village guard system. The village guard system is a comprehensive issue which should be discussed by experts and state institutions. The system cannot be evaluated based on only one incident. This system has a security angle and should be evaluated carefully and then the appropriate action should be taken."

#### TV News (CNN Turk)

#### Domestic

- State Minister Selma Aliye Kavaf said 48 children lost one or both of their parents in the wedding attack in Mardin. Kavaf and President Gul's wife Hayrunnisa Gul are expected to pay a visit to the region today

- The Parliament establishes a special commission to probe the massacre in Mardin. Members of the commission will go to Mardin next week

- Court of Appeals President Hasan Gerceker said that they were not against the constitutional reforms but the reforms should infringe the basic principles of the republic

#### World

- Turkish Foreign Ministry condemns a genocide motion passed by the South Australian parliament

- Armenian-origin French singer Charles Aznavour is appointed as Armenian Ambassador to Switzerland

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